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BOSTON

I N D U S T R I A L   L A N D   U S E

S U R V E Y

EAST BOSTON

NORTH END

CHARLESTOWN

1 9 7 2



*East Boston*

*B 6 5 2*

*1 1*

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LIBRARY





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1) INTRODUCTION

An inventory of industrial land uses was made by EDIC in August 1972. The survey covered three districts in the northern part of the city of Boston. They are East Boston, the North End, and Charlestown. (See Fig. 4) The three areas are combined together in one report due to the small number of manufacturing plants in each area individually. Although the three districts have many similarities, physically and structurally, there are some noticeable differences. The three distinctive characteristics they have in common are (1) their former dependence on the waterfront (2) the old age of the buildings in which most manufacturing is performed and (3) the narrowness and dilapidated nature of the streets. To a great extent their pattern of historical development has also been very similar. This industrial area is dominated by two gigantic activities - the Logan International Airport in East Boston, and the Navy and Coast Guard yard of the US Navy in Charlestown.



2) SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The Charlestown, East Boston and North End districts are a place of contact providing services to both hinterland and sea going activities. Their primary function has been the transfer of goods and transport lines are the most critical element in their functioning.

The Inner Harbor is a good interior port, with extended waterfronts , well protected from the open sea. Bulk cargo such as crude oil is the major activity along most of the waterfront. Along the Mystic River Channel general cargo trade is to be found. This has maximized the use of local labor. The U.S. Navy and Coast Gaurd yards occupy most of the land along the Inner Harbor waterfront in Charlestown.

The importance of good road, rail, mass transit and air and water transport to an industrial site cannot be over-emphasized. An ideal industrial site would be near the waterfront but within switching limits of an interstate highway or rail terminal. Such a location, ensuring rapid flows of goods and people is to be found in East Boston and Charlestown. However at the present time much of East Boston, and Charlestown and the North End , with their old industrial structures, storage yards, vacant and parking parcels, neglected railroad facilities and blighted residential and commercial properties are detrimental to all new industrial land requirements. Land uses are unsightly and rundown in many places, uninviting to new activity and a depressing environment for many people who live and work there.





The important requirement in these three districts is a realistic approach to the declining waterfront trade. Those responsible for planning new highways, airways, truck terminals and port development, can anticipate manufacturing growth provided that some changes are made immediately. The availability of land at a reasonable cost, improvements in the roads and streets leading to industrial parcels and removal of some of the more objectionable problems such as dirty streets, on the street parking and bad traffic control systems on main streets can do much to upgrade the districts of Charlestown, East Boston and the North End.

Further research is required to learn which industries could realize important economies by locating in these districts. If large parcels of land could be integrated into an industrial area, a nucleus of waterfront linked activity may have an opportunity to develop spontaneously. Industries based on oil and petroleum may do well, since the oil trade has been doing very well in these districts and continues to grow. According to the Boston Seaport 1970-1990 , the petroleum trade accounts for 90% of the total Port of Boston Traffic.

There is a possibility that consumer oriented products may find these two districts a suitable location for manufacturing their products. Although such a move may lead to the further decline of the preeminence of the waterfront, it may on the other hand serve to revitalize the two districts by providing more jobs, and better use of vacant and underused parcels, and also

---



lead to the removal of some of the old and dangerous buildings that are to be found in several places.

Modern urban locations of manufacturing industries realize few advantages from a waterfront location due to their increased orientation to service and consumer goods , requiring rapid and frequent contact. However, a demand for airport oriented uses could be investigated, since Logan Airport is an important asset to these districts. New industry may also find the extensive highway facilities an advantage. They may be able to use some of the existing and unused warehouses and piers for more suitable activities. In view of the shortage of industrial land in downtown Boston, the garment, printing, furniture, automobile companies may find this a desirable location.



3) HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT:

Though having a somewhat similar historical background, Charlestown, East Boston and the North End during the 19th century developed a distinctive industrial life. This however declined extensively since WW 11 and today many wharfs and piers can be seen to be in disuse. The past industry of the area can be seen in the nature of the buildings on the waterfront, the layout of the rails and the streets and the types of manufacturing still to be seen on a few parcels.

<sup>1</sup>  
East Boston is located on what was five islands in the Massachusetts Bay. As a result of land filling these islands are now a part of the peninsula that extends into Boston Harbor. The area was settled at a very early date, but the development of the district started after 1833 when the East Boston Company purchased the entire island. Much of the subsequent growth took the form of commercial-industrial uses, especially within the shipping field. A rapid industrialization took place in the 1850's, lending to East Boston and international spirit, associated with the waves of immigration, the foreign trade that was very extensive, leading to the establishment of sugar refineries, oil and lumber companies.

<sup>2</sup>  
Charlestown till 1930 was occupied by persons of moderate means, distilling and shipping were the major activities. At a very early date it had developed a sugar refinery, a hard goods

---

<sup>1</sup> East Boston. Unpublished material. BRA 1970

<sup>2</sup> Project Improvements-Charlestown GNRP area. Prepared by Edwards and Kelcey Engineers & Consultants for BRA June 1963



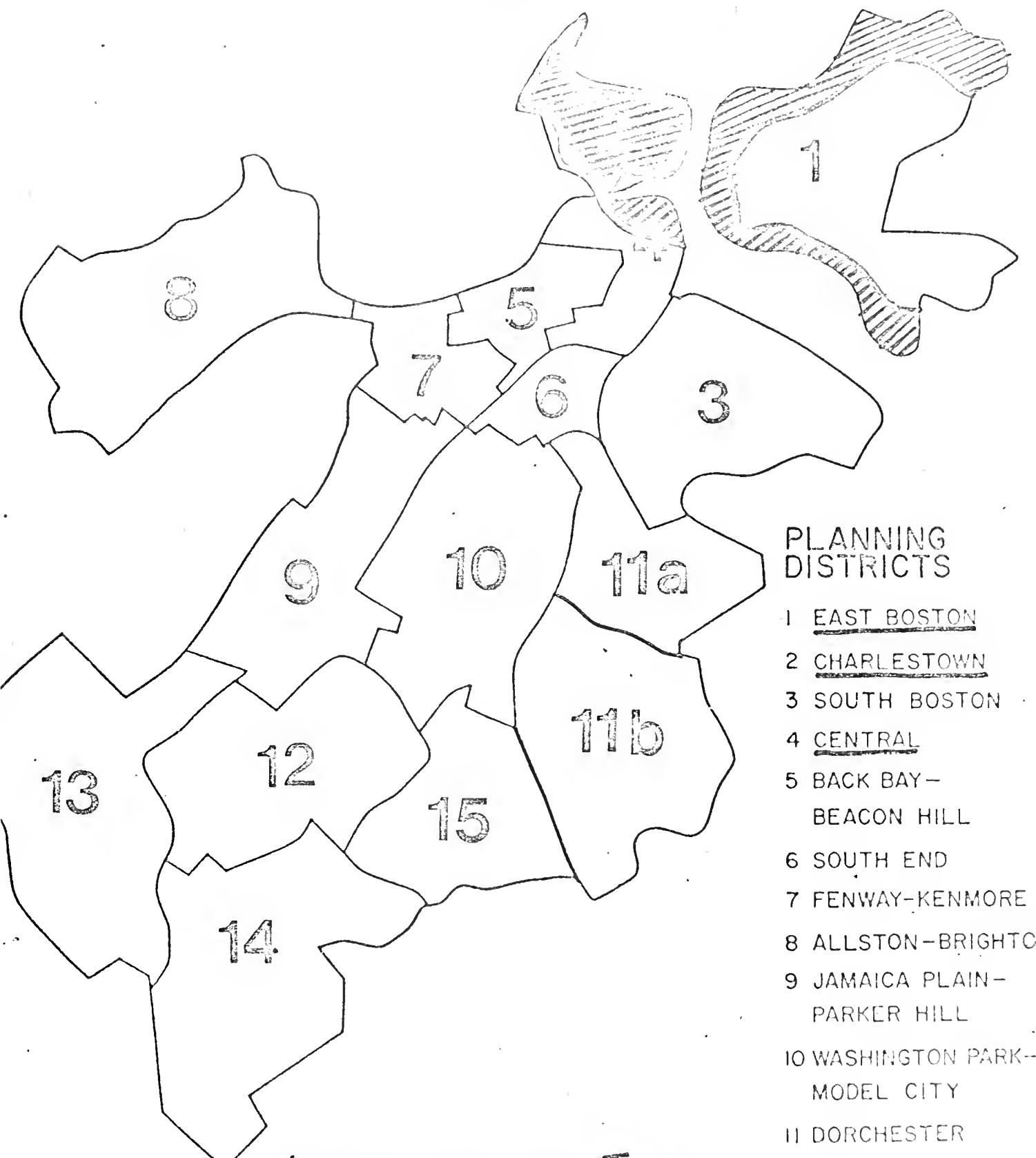
factory, a lead company, a bleachery, and a gas and waterworks company. The shipping of grains to foreign lands was a major activity and grain elevators could be seen along the waterfront in Charlestown. The Navy Yard was established on the East Side in 1800.

The economic development of the North End followed the same pattern of the former. It was heavily oriented to foreign trade throughout. Grain, lumber were exported from its wharfs and leather, wool, cotton and silk were imported for the New England manufacturers.

The entire character of Charlestown, East Boston and the North End began to change with the depression of the 1930's. With the migration of industry to the South, the pattern of foreign trade was reoriented. Many importing companies moved to New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore. Several merged with each other and many went out of business. The Navy Yard was the only operation that did not experience any significant decline, although there were several modernization projects that were put into operation. Logan International Airport expanded enormously during the years soon after the war and continues to do so today.







PLANNING DISTRICTS

- 1 EAST BOSTON
- 2 CHARLESTOWN
- 3 SOUTH BOSTON
- 4 CENTRAL
- 5 BACK BAY - BEACON HILL
- 6 SOUTH END
- 7 FENWAY-KENMORE
- 8 ALLSTON-BRIGHTON
- 9 JAMAICA PLAIN - PARKER HILL
- 10 WASHINGTON PARK - MODEL CITY
- 11 DORCHESTER
- 12 ROSLINDALE
- 13 WEST ROXBURY
- 14 HYDE PARK
- 15 MATTAPAN-FRANKLIN

LOCATION OF THE SURVEY AREA.

FIGURE 4

DISTRICT  
PLANNING  
GRAM





#### 4) PHYSICAL ASPECTS

##### A. Study Area-

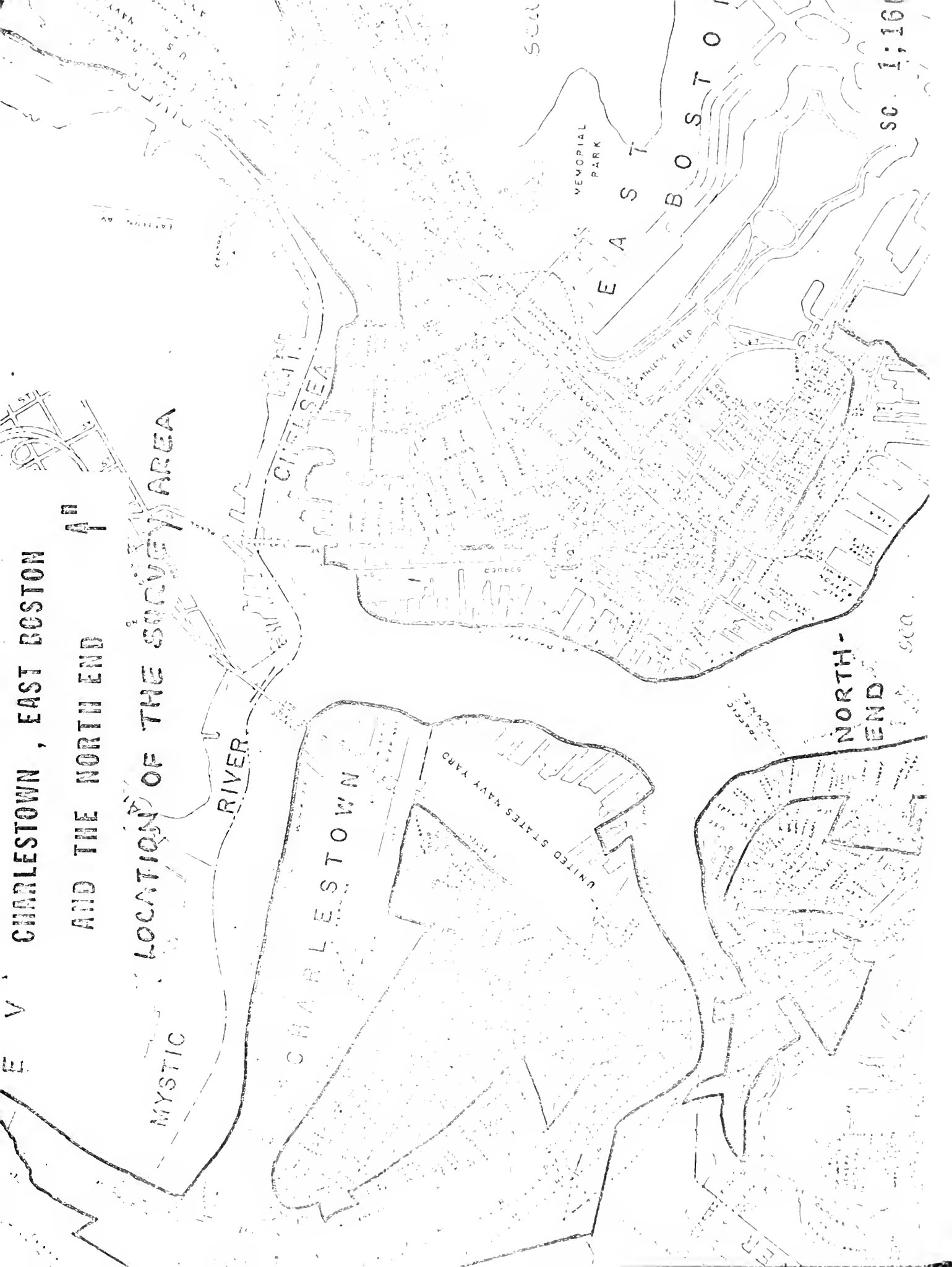
In the Industrial Areas of Charlestown, East Boston and the North End, the land zoned for manufacturing activities lies all along the waterfront. Specifically this land is adjacent to the Inner Harbor, the Chelsea River and the Mystic River.

In Charlestown this industrial land forms a circular zone around the entire district. It encloses a somewhat triangular residential district in the center, thus cutting off access to the waterfront. East Boston is a residential community edged by an industrial zone running along the western and southern side. To the east lies Logan International Airport so that residents of East Boston, like Charlestown are cut off from the waterfront/ In the North End the industrial zone forms a roughly semicircular belt along the Inner Harbor. Charlestown and East Boston are connected to downtown Boston by two tunnels the Callahan and Sumner, an MTA tunnel, the Charlestown bridge and the Warren Avenue bridge. However there are no accessways between Charlestown and East Boston or vice versa. Access to the north is fairly good there are four bridges across the Mystic and the Chelsea Rivers. (See Fig. 4a)



E V CHARLESTOWN, EAST BOSTON  
AND THE NORTH END

LOCATION OF THE SOCIETY AREA



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SC



## BUILDING CONDITIONS

### A. East Boston

The building conditions in East Boston, as reported from the field survey, shows very few buildings in excellent condition. (See Building Condition Map) Of all the buildings surveyed in East Boston, only 9.2% were reported in excellent condition, while 48.3% were reported as moderate and 42.5% of them were in poor condition. (See Building Condition Table 9e, Pg 65) The buildings reported in moderate and poor condition are scattered throughout the East Boston area. Most of the buildings along the waterfront were reported in poor condition, possibly due to age and disuse.

### B. North End

The building conditions in the North End, as reported from the field survey, shows most of the buildings in moderate condition. (See Building Condition Map) Of the three possibilities of excellent, moderate, and poor; 68.1% were reported as moderate in condition. (See Building Condition Table 9k73 ) Only 6.4% of the buildings in the North End survey area were reported in excellent condition and 25.5% of them were reported in poor condition.

### C. Charlestown

The building conditions in the Charlestown survey area showed similar features to those in the North End. (see Building Condition Map) Of all the buildings reported in the survey, 51.6% were reported as moderate in





condition. (See Building Conditions Table 9p, Pg 81)

Only 14.5% of the buildings in Charlestown were reported as excellent in condition and 33.9% of them were reported in poor condition.

### BUILDING DENSITY

#### A. East Boston

The building density in East Boston, as shown on the Building Density map, shows the 1 and 2 story structures as the predominate type. No specific pattern exists in their location except to say they are scattered over the whole area. There are 17 buildings in the 3-4 story category. No agglomerations exist among them. Commercial, manufacturing, and warehousing each occupy some of the 3-4 story buildings. There are 3 buildings in the 5-6 story category. Two of them are used by commercial concerns, one on Border Street and the other on Liverpool Street. The 3rd 5-6 story building is a warehouse on New Street. Three buildings were reported in the 7+ story category. Two of these are warehouses, one located on the corner of Marginal and Lewis Streets in an area of large vacant tracts and the other is on New Street. The 3rd building in this category is a new Ramada Inn.

#### B. North End

As shown on the Building Density Map of the area designated as the North End, there are relatively few one story structures. These buildings are found mainly along Commercial Street and Atlantic Avenue and are being



used primarily by commercial concerns. Only 8 buildings were reported in the 2-story category. Two areas of 2-story buildings stand out in the North End. One is located in the area of Friend Street, Portland Street, and Lancaster Street and being used by commercial activities. The other area is off of Atlantic Avenue and is being used for light manufacturing and commercial uses. The 3-4 story buildings are scattered in the area and many are located on Canal, Friend, and Portland Streets mixed with 5-6 story buildings. The 5-6 story buildings are the most common type in the North End. Three major clusters, used primarily by commercial and light manufacturers, stand out in this category. One grouping is in the area of Canal, Friend, Portland, and Lancaster Streets. Another is around Keany Square and the 3rd is in an area bounded by North Street, Atlantic Avenue, Mercantile Street, and Cross Street. There were 8 buildings reported as 7+ story structures. These are scattered in the North End and are used by commercial, warehouse, and light manufacturing uses.

#### C. Charlestown

The building density in Charlestown, as shown on the Building Density map, has the one story structure as the most common type. These buildings are scattered in the district, but one small area does stand out as an agglomeration of one story structures. This is an area bounded by Cambridge Street and the Boston and Maine RR tracks



and Rutherford Avenue and the Boston and Maine RR tracks. Most of these buildings are being used by light manufacturers and warehouseers. The 2-story structures are the 2nd most common in Charlestown. These buildings are also scattered in the area with one clustering along Dorrance Street and Arlington Street. The buildings here are used mainly by light manufacturing concerns. The 3-4 story buildings are scattered in the district with two areas exhibiting a concentration of them. One of these concentrations is along Medford Street and in use by light manufacturers and warehouseers. The other area is along Cambridge Street and Rutherford Avenue and being used by light manufacturers. The 5-6 story buildings are very limited in Charlestown, only 8. Of these, 75% of them are off of Medford Street. Only 5 buildings in Charlestown were reported as 7+ story structures. These are found mainly around the intersection of Medford Street and Terminal Street.



## A. East Boston

Of those activities surveyed in the area designated for the survey as East Boston, the warehousing sector was predominant as far as the number of establishments. This is followed respectively by commercial, light manufacturing, and heavy manufacturing. (Refer to Table 9, Pg 58) The commercial sector, however, had the largest figure of total parcel area occupied. This is somewhat misleading, however, since one concern reported under the commercial sector was a drive-in theater which was located on a parcel that covered 1,207,000 square feet. This figure is an anomaly to the average parcel size of the remaining commercial activities of which the average parcel size is approximately 51,000 square feet. The survey of East Boston reported a total of 87 establishments occupying 141.2 acres of parcel space. (Refer to Tables in Appendix)

The commercial activities in East Boston listed 30 establishments with an average parcel size of approximately two acres. As mentioned above, this figure is heavily influenced by the 1,207,000 square foot parcel. The commercial concerns are scattered throughout the survey area with the lack of them in some areas being more significant than a concentration of them in any particular location. (See Land Use Map) One small cluster does stand out along Liverpool Street and Border Street. The specific function of these firms was not reported in the field survey. A notable characteristic of the commercial activities





in East Boston is their location being mixed with warehousing and manufacturing firms in the majority of the survey area.

Light manufacturing in East Boston has 19 establishments occupying 21.2 acres with the average parcel size being slightly over 1 acre. Furniture and printing were notable activities of the East Boston manufacturers, but due to the fact the products being produced was not available for each firm reported, it cannot be stated that these are the most significant products of the district., No specific pattern exists in the location of manufacturing firms and no area has what could be considered a high concentration or agglomeration of manufacturers. Six light manufacturing firms are located on Border Street, but these are spread along a stretch of approximately 3/4 of a mile.

Only six establishments in East Boston were reported as heavy manufacturers. These six firms occupy approximately 9 acres of parcel space with the average parcel size being 1 & 1/2 acres. The location of these firms is scattered in the area, thus no agglomeration or pattern exists. All six firms were reported from the field survey to have a high degree of use indicating they must presently be viable concerns.

The economic activity in East Boston which has the most firms, 32, is the warehousing industry. This can be attributed to the historical development of the area based on its location on the Boston Inner Harbor and the Chelsea River. The warehousing sector of East Boston's economy



occupies approximately 49.3 acres of parcel space with the average parcel size being about 1 1/2 acres. The degree of use of these warehouses, however, has declined. Presently, as reported from the field survey, only 9.4% of all the warehouses are being heavily used. Most of the warehouses are located in a linear pattern along the waterfront. Few of these buildings are new, only 2, and 46.8% of them were reported in poor condition.

#### B. North End

Land use, in the section of the North End delimited for the survey, shows a relatively small amount of economic activities scattered over the area. (See Land Use Map) The field survey reported 47 firms operating in the North End and occupying approximately 14.3 acres of parcel space. (Refer to Tables in Appendix) Of the economic activities in the North End, commercial was predominant with 21 firms followed by light manufacturing, and warehousing. No heavy manufacturers exist in the North End. (Table 9g, Pg 69)

The commercial activities in the North End occupy a little over 4 acres of parcel space. Of these, the wholesaling and retailing of furniture was the major activity. The furniture district in the North End forms the major agglomeration of commercial activities in the district. This is located on Friend Street, Canal Street, and Portland Street. These concerns were reported in moderate condition with a moderate to heavy degree of use. (See Commercial Tables in Appendix)

From the field survey, 16 firms were reported as



light manufacturers in the North End. Approximately 7 acres of parcel space are occupied by light manufacturing. The average parcel size is slightly less than 1/2 an acre. One major cluster of light manufacturers exists in the North End. This is an area which lies between N. Washington Street and the SE Expressway and Lovejoy Place and Traverse Street. This cluster is close to a residential area which is located off of N. Washington on Thatcher Street and Endicott Street.

Warehousing in the North End has the least amount of firms and covers the smallest amount of parcel space. The field survey reported 10 warehouses occupying approximately 3 acres with the average parcel size being 14,131 square feet. One cluster of warehouses in the North End is located along Friend Street between Market and Traverse Streets. The sites of these warehouses are mixed with commercial activities.

#### C. Charlestown

Land use in the area of Charlestown delimited for the field survey, is one which has large areas of vacant land, especially near the North End district, with commercial, light manufacturing, and warehousing concerns scattered in the district. (See Land Use Map) A total of 62 firms were reported in the area, occupying approximately 190 acres of land. (Refer to Tables in Appendix) Light manufacturing was the predominant activity reported followed respectively by warehousing, commercial, and heavy manufacturing. (Table 9m, Pg 77)



The commercial activities in Charlestown listed 13 firms occupying approximately 12 acres with 42,000 square feet being the average parcel size. No major location feature exists in the commercial activities. They are scattered in five areas and are overshadowed by warehouses and light manufactureres. Rutherford, Cambridge, and Load Streets are where 7 of the 13 commercial interests are found.

Light manufacturing in Charlestown occupies 50.3% of the parcel space surveyed. Twenty-four light manufacturers were reported in Charlestown occupying approximately 95 acres with an average parcel size of 4 acres. This figure is heavily influenced by 3 companies, Whiting Milk, American Surgar Refining, and Schrafft Candy, which togeter account for over 2 million square feet of parcel space. Three major clusters of light manufacturing stand out in the Charlestown area. One cluster lies between Rutherford Avenue and the Boston and Maine RR tracks and Cambridge Street and Street D. Another cluster is located in a triangular shaped area bounded by Arlington Street, Dorrance Street, and Sherman Street. Several large companies, (Schrafft, American Sugar Refining, Revere Sugar Refining) are located along Medford Street and where Medford meets Main Street. From the data gathered in the field survey, 54.2% of the light manufacturers in Charlestown were operating at a heavy degree of use and only 8.3% were operating at a light degree of use. (Table 9q, pg 83) Food processing was the major function of light manufact-





urers as reported in the field survey.

Only one firm was reported in Charlestown as a heavy manufacturer. This was a sheet metal company at 492 Main Street. The firm occupies approximately 2 1/2 acres, was reported in poor condition, and its degree of use is light.

Warehousing in Charlestown listed 24 firms as did light manufacturing, but occupied less parcel space. Warehousing covers approximately 81.5 acres with the average parcel size being 3.3 acres. Some of the products being stored in these warehouses are tires, lumber, and electrical supplies. However, all of the different products being stored was not available so no correlation could be drawn between product type and type of economic firms in the area. Two clusters of warehouses stand out in Charlestown. One agglomeration is a large area in the northeast section of the survey area which lies between the Mystic River and the Little Mystic Channel. Another is located along Medford Street mixed with light manufacturing firms. These warehouses are possibly linked with the manufacturing concerns but this could not be determined from the field survey.



6) LOCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MANUFACTURING:

The growth of manufacturing activities within the districts has been almost negligible in the past two decades. The only manufacturing that is of some importance has been there for a long time. Manufacturing is relatively unimportant today as an employment source compared to transportation, transshipment and construction/repair activities. Due to the diverse nature of activities (see tables in the appendix.) in the three areas, they have been dealt with separately.

EAST BOSTON:

East Boston is primarily a residential district, bounded by industrial areas along the harbor on one side, and Logan International Airport on the other. Commercial uses are concentrated at a few centrally located squares. One common type of development found is the mixed commercial/residential use with family owned stores on the ground floor of apartments.

The bulk of industries in East Boston is oriented towards the harbor front activities, which bound the area on three sides, the north along Chelsea River, the west and the south along the Inner Harbor. (See the Zoning Map). There is some waterfront oriented manufacturing uses on the north and south sides, but along the western front there has been extensive decline. On the northern front i.e., along the Chelsea River there are several oil storage and ship repair facilities. On the south side, along the Inner Harbor Shipyard and piers facilities belonging to the Port Authority still remain active.



East Boston provides the greatest number of jobs in the transshipment, communication, utilities, and petroleum storage activities. There is some light and heavy manufacturing that is not connected to the waterfront. The greatest number of jobs in any single enterprise are provided by Bethlehem Steel Company shipyard and Logan International Airport. Although there is a considerable amount of manufacturing, both heavy and light, as an employment source shipping, transport and services are more significant

Products manufactured in the East Boston district are very diversified. There is however a somewhat pronounced dependence on the ship repair and ship maintenance industries in the district. There is also a well developed oil storage and petroleum refining activity. Among manufacturing industries most products are geared to the requirements of the shipping industry. Heavy manufacturing is primarily for the shipping industry, and includes the manufacture of tackles, hooks, sheaves, steel facits, iron fittings for ships, structural steel products for the Navy and Coast gaurd ships.

The proximity of the East Boston industrial area to downtown Boston has made it a desirable location for manufacturers of some non-durable products. Dress makers, drapery makers, upholsterers, frozen foods and publishing houses are located along the western waterfront area. These industries are relatively more recent than the heavy manufacturing industries, some of which date back to the 1850's. It should be noted that some of these activities are directly related to the downtown district of Boston; but they are much larger in size and have a larger number



employees. Also, they have been recording a fairly steady growth pattern while most of the garment and publishing and printing industries have been declining.

While the elongated shape of the industrial area in East Boston, is an advantage to the extent that it provides extended waterfront facilities there are some disadvantages being faced today. The dispersed nature of industrial locations entails long drives by trucks, trailers and automobiles to enter the McClellan Highway (Route C-1), and through its tunnels to the city of Boston. Since most of the roads running off the waterfront area are old they are narrow and their lighting and control system is inadequate to handle the heavy traffic. As a result, there is acute congestion during work hours on Chelsea, Condor and Meridian Streets. The extremely limited number of accessways from East Boston to Chelsea (2 bridges) to Boston proper (2 tunnels) and to Revere (2 bridges) makes transportation the number one problem of drivers in East Boston. Complaints recorded in the Boston Industrial and Commercial Questionnaire ranged from insufficient parking space, congested streets, traffic bottlenecks at the entrance and exits of bridges and tunnels, and most of all the long holdups and delays in the Sumner and Callahan tunnels into and out of Boston proper.

The second largest problem in East Boston was the availability and productivity of labor. Those industries with a high labor to capital ratio such as shipping, warehouse and transportation, are unlikely to locate out in East Boston today. There was a general complaint by most industrialists that they





unsatisfied with the conditions of labor. Both skilled and unskilled labor are reluctant to come out to East Boston, and when they did wages demanded were high. Productivity of labor was usually low, at the same time the unionism of labor was high so that it was often difficult to operate and handle the workers. Labor was difficult to obtain due to the problems of congestion on bridges and streets from Boston and the North Shore. Mass transit to the north shore was not as good as that to the downtown district.

Last, East Boston industrialists are faced with the problem of competing with two giant activities - Logan International Airport and the Mass Port Authorities and their land grabbing activities. The second great competitor for land is the MBTA and the high way authorities. These two organizations are competing for land with the factories and in most cases the former are doing better.



LOCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MANUFACTURING

NORTH END:

Locationally, the North End is the heart of the city of Boston. If industrial land were available it would provide a very good location for the non durable goods industry, which supplies products for the metropolitan market. The North End has the triple advantages, it is an area from which industry is rapidly departing. Due to the decline of the waterfront industries, outmoded, corroded piers and wharves now lie in disuse. They are mostly vacant buildings which were formerly warehouses and offices fallen vacant between the Charles River front and the Expressway. The extensive usage of rail by warehouses in the former days can be seen in the number of unused rail siding which go to the end of several wharves.

In some areas nonwaterfront uses have infiltrated into land that has been zoned for waterfront industrial uses. On the east side piers and warehouses along Commercial Street are largely vacant. Several parcels of former warehousing land has been cleared along Atlantic Avenue.

In the northern part of Commercial Street a few old industries still survive; the Bay State Lobster Co., the Boston Sausage and Provision Co. There are two institutional properties - the U.S. Coast Guard and Marine Inspection piers, and the Power Station. Elsewhere waterfront land is largely in disuse. Valuable land is now used for parking and storage facilities. It appears that the waterfront has ceased to be a locational asset to the industries of the city of Boston today. The complete decline of the export trade of the city and the relative decline of its

Export trade



import trade for manufacturing industries has made the existence of a waterfront location a superfluous factor. Most industrial firms do not seek a location near the harbor due to their preference for truck and tractor trailers as their mode of transport.

Away from the waterfront small manufacturing plants cluster together on small parcels of land. These include the furniture upholstery, drapery and lumber and garment companies. These firms perform several functions at one location, most of them manufacturing, display, warehouse and wholesale at one location. Problems of the congestion and bad parking facilities offered in this congested area: Truck docks are generally small and inadequate for the parking and unloading of the large tractor trailers. Taxes and rents are too high to permit the expansion of manufacturing activities so that firms are forced to move out. The BRA redevelopment activity had displaced several entrepreneurs. The fish market has moved to a new location from its old location at the North End piers. Conditions of roads and streets leading to the waterfront is poor and inadequate for the modern trucks. There were a few complaints that the productivity of labor in the garment industry of the North End is low although the wages are good and the laborers are generally skilled. Congestion, rents and labor are the three major problems of the North End followed by badly maintained streets, vandalism and fire hazard. These factors deter any new manufacturing activity in the North End.



CHARLESTOWN:

This district is one of the oldest industrial areas in the city of Boston. Some of the earliest manufacturing industries such as the Mayflower Creamery (1837), Stickney and Poor Spice Co. (1840), United Farmers (1921), W.F. Schraft (1930), H.P. Hoods (1928) and the Revere and Domino Sugar Companies are the oldest of their kind in the city of Boston. Among the newer companies the nondurable product industries are more important. They include the American Paper Box Company, G.D. Matthews and Sons food services, the Rapid Furniture Company etc. Thus there are two or more distinct groups of industries in Charlestown today, one group that is old and dependent of water transport, and the other nondurable, newer and using the tractor trailer as the most common mode of transport.

The former group of industries were transportation conscious, due to the weight losses incurred in the manufacturing process. They were also that group of industries that required frequent and rapid contact with the city center. Among the former were the sugar refineries on the Mystic river front; among the latter are the Hoods and Whiting Milk Companies.

The major areas of manufacturing activities are the Medford Street area around the Mystic River Channel, Rutherford Street, Mystic Way and Cambridge Street. Elsewhere large companies have gone out of business leading to the stagnation of the waterfront. Along Miller's River Basin in the southern part of Charlestown, under the S.E. Expressway, and the overhead MBTA lines large areas of land are not presently in use. The decline of manufacturing





activities in the city was a gradual process, which hit the durable goods industries particularly hard. Charlestown and East Boston have been historically oriented towards the durable goods industry. As a result, the decline of the long distance shipment of products made the extensive rail facilities no longer necessary. Like South Boston, railroad properties along the Somerville/Boston boundaries are largely in disuse. The Boston and Maine Railroad Terminals, Price Brothers Liquor Warehouse, North End Coal Co, New England Pipe and Supply Co. are all now unused warehouses. Along Rutherford Street some vacant parcels of land are still in disuse, although the BRA has some projects underway. On Rutherford Street also are the large milk companies with rail siding, parking space and truck docks, John Carter and Co. (wholesaler of paper). Two major freight terminals, the Wiggins Freight Terminal and the D.S. Woodberry Freight Terminal are now abandoned.

Around Sullivan Square in Charlestown a variety of manufacturing uses are found. The largest operation is the Schraft Candy Company, a hardware company, and followed by a hardware company, an imported lumber company, an industrial oils and cleaners company.

The Mystic River Front is somewhat more intensively used than other parts of Charlestown. Manufacturing and warehousing are mixed together. Most of the buildings are very old and antiquated. This area houses the sugar refineries of the Revere, and Amstar Companies, The Lechmere Importing piers, the Goodyear Tire Importing piers, and numerous gift importers and their warehouses.

The Inner Harbor is on the east side of Charlestown, and



in this area several hundred acres of land are used by the Navy Yard and the Coast Guard services. The Navy Yard employs roughly 10,000 people who commute to work every day. Thus traffic on the Mystic River Bridge tends to be heavy, the combination of trucks and automobiles is hazardous. Some of the problems of parking that are presently faced by the Navy Yard will be relieved by the construction of two parking facilities, one at Sullivan Square, and the other at the MTA Station at Austin and Rutherford Streets.

North of the Little Mystic Channel, there is land available for more intensive industrial use. The land has potential in the sense that there are no physical problems of great magnitude since it is one of the few places that the waterfront is still active. The Mystic River Bridge connects the area to the north Shore; the S.E. Expressway and the MBTA are within a 10 minutes walk. It is well separated from the residential district and could be well used for heavy manufacturing or large scale warehousing activities.

Although the preminence of a water front location has declined in most manufacturing activities, there are still advantages to be gained by locating in the Charlestown area. Certain types of activities that cannot locate in the central city such as the oil and sugar refineries, the lumber and steel mills, the aircraft factories may find this a very good location. Ship building and repairing industries are obviously constrained to waterfront areas. The decline of manufacturing appears to have been more rapid along the B and M railroad than along the waterfront. There is a fair chance that land along the Mystic and Little Mystic



Rivers can be more intensively used, revitalized with the infusion of newer industries and with the upgrading of present facilities provided on the waterfront. Charlestown as a whole has excellent locational advantages for the non durable goods industry, a large labor market, nearness to downtown, the SE Expressway, to the new Interstate 93, the orange line of the MBTA. It has extensive waterfront facilities that with some remodelling could provide well spread out modern factory and warehouse space. Being an old industrial area Charlestown has a well integrated labor force, most of it drawn from the neighborhood itself.

However, there are some problems that may face the entrepreneurs. Charlestown is faced with acute traffic congestion on its major streets since a lot of north-south traffic goes across this district. Its own traffic is quite heavy: There are complaints that the BRA creates problems in renting vacant land to private developers. There are problems of obsolescence and decay along the northern and southern waterfront area. City services such as street lighting, cleaning, fire and police protection are poor.



7) TRANSPORT FACILITIES:

East Boston, Charlestown and the North End are the major route through which north bound traffic passes on their way from Downtown Boston to the north shore communities. Apart from the heavy crosstown traffic, there is a considerable amount of traffic generated by these communities themselves. A consideration of the transportation facilities available in the three districts is therefore of some relevance.

1. Highways and Streets- The Sumner and Callahan tunnels carry traffic under Boston Harbor to East Boston's residential and industrial areas. From there the elevated McClellan Highway (Route 1) provides a link to Revere and points on the North shore. Airport traffic is routed on a special expressway, and this is beneficial because it greatly decreases the use on local streets.

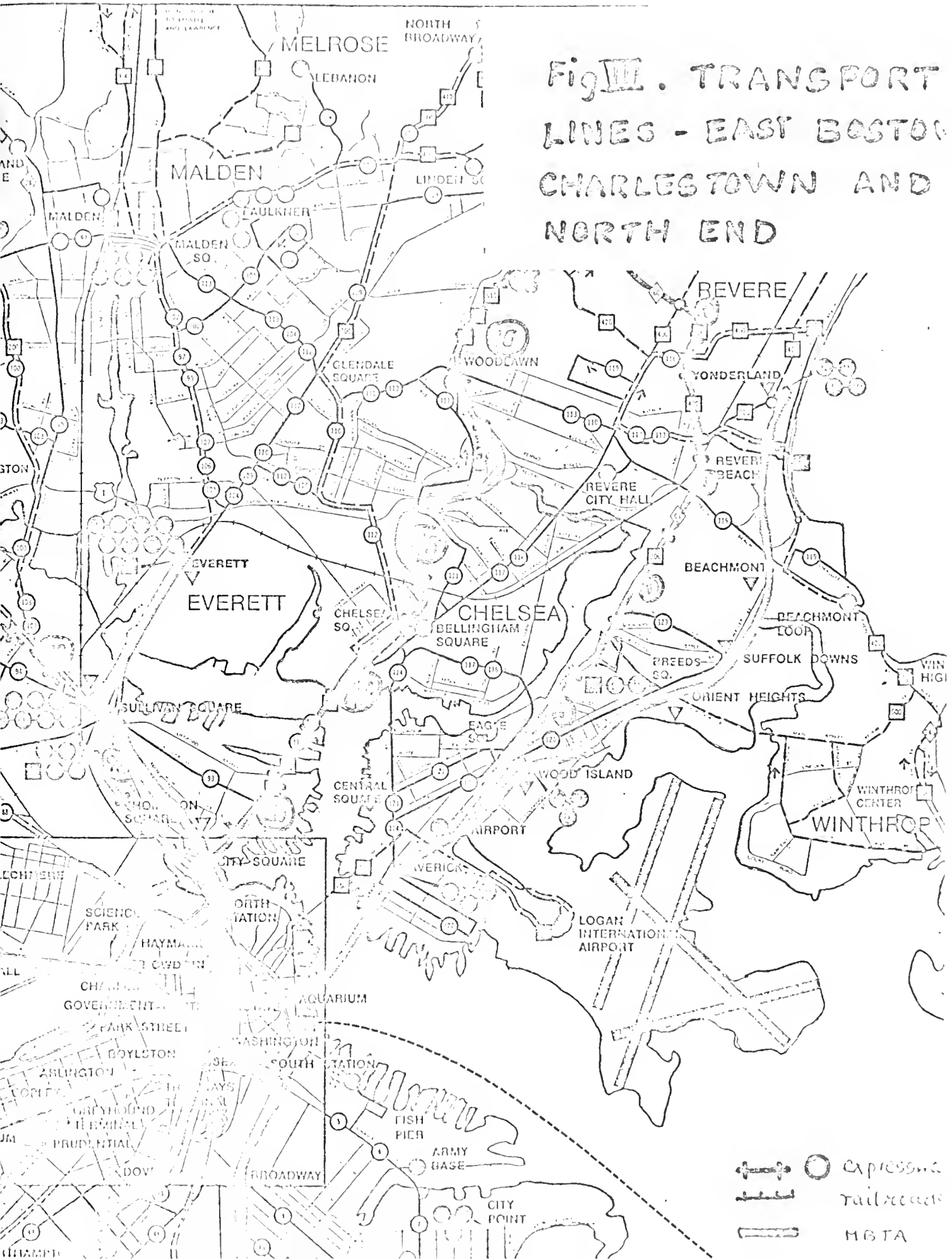
Traffic from the North End and downtown Boston crosses into Charlestown via the Charlestown bridge. Interstate 95 a major expressway on the east coast has its own bridge across the Charles River. Two major Expressways cut across the district of Charlestown; one, mentioned above, passes along the eastern side, on the side of the Navy Yard. Another expressway, the I-93 (soon to be completed) passes across the western side along the Charlestown/Somerville boundary. These two expressways will be linked to each other and to the SE Expressway. Interstate 95 then goes north across the Mystic River Bridge to Chelsea and the North shore.




2. Airport - Logan International Airport managed by Mass. Port Authority is the eighth busiest in the U S A. Located





# Fig III. TRANSPORT LINES - EAST BOSTON CHARLESTOWN AND NORTH END



-  Expressway
-  Railroads
-  MBTA



in East Boston it serves not only Boston, but also the greater part of New England. Expansion of facilities is currently underway and more is expected. Expansion has created many problems - taking of houses, decreasing open recreation space, increasing noise, all leading to the decline in property values.

3. Port of Boston - Sea trade was an important factor in the development of the three districts. As it stands today, the decline in the waterfront activity has affected the economic life of the three districts for the worse. Nearly 1/2 of the land previously occupied by shipyards, coal terminals, lumber and grain yards is now in disuse. The harbor is still a major oil storage area, particularly the area adjacent to the Chelsea River. Along the Medford Street and Terminal Street areas of Charlestown some trade in general cargo still exists. Except for the Navy Yard and the Port Authority Wharves on the southern part of East Boston, most waterfront land use does not maximize the utility of waterfront space.

4. Mass Transit - The Orange Line connects Boston to Charlestown, then goes north to Everett. The Blue Line provides mass transit to residents of East Boston, and connects downtown Boston to Revere and the North Shore. In addition to mass transit there are several bus routes. See Fig. 7

5. Railroads - The Boston and Albany railroad occupied a north south rail line, serving the port and industrial plants. Many lines are no longer active, several terminals have been shut down. However major tracks still in use are 2 in East Boston and 2 in Charlestown.



CHARLESTOWN, EAST BOSTON

AND THE NORTH END



MYSTIC

CHARLESTOWN

UNITED STATES NAVY YARD

CHELSEA

RIVER



8) POSSIBLE FUTURE SITES

PRIME PARCELS

TABLE 8

EXISTING USE	PARCEL (SQ. FT.)	CONDITION	DEGREE OF USE	LOCATION
1-Vacant Lot	52,728			78-88 Cambridge St
2-Vacant Lot (Used for Parking)	23,860			92-98 Cambridge St
3-United Farmers; Garage	19,523			100 Cambridge St
4-Vacant Lot	6,708			Carter St.
5-V. Scholl-Truck & Auto Repair	8,675	Moderate	Light	116 Cambridge St
6-Parking Lot	24,139			118-22 Cambridge
7-Garage	12,875			128-34 Cambridge
8-Office Bldg.-1 story	6,586	Moderate	Moderate	142 Cambridge
9-Parking Lot & Schack	4,984			65 Roland St.
10-Vacant Building	38,500	Poor	Empty	40-46 Roland
11-Storage Yard	44,511			30-34 Roland
12-Vacant Lot	19,605			10 Roland
13-Carter St.-Stark St-Part of Roland St	44,400			

PARCELS NEEDED TO COMPLETE BLOCK

EXISTING USE	PARCEL (SQ. FT.)	CONDITION	DEGREE OF USE	LOCATION
14-Retail & Residential	2,572			104 Cambridge
15-Retail & Residential	987			108 Cambridge
16-Paper Box Mfgr.	57,325	Moderate	Moderate	24 Roland





Fig 8a

Hood Milk Co.



Boston + Maine R.R.

Interstate 93



## EXISTING USE

Currently most of the land is vacant or being used as parking areas with a few small retailers and only one major firm, the paper box manufacturer at 24 Roland Street (Parcel 16). It is a 3 story brick building in moderate condition but occupies only 1/8 of its 57,325 square feet parcel with the rest of the land remaining unused. Relocation would not be a problem due to the abundance of vacant parcels throughout Charlestown. However, they would probably prefer to stay in the area and could be temporarily relocated until the site is developed.

If the site is created, two residential units would have to be relocated but they are the only two houses located in the general study area and would benefit by moving to residential neighborhood.

## LOCATION

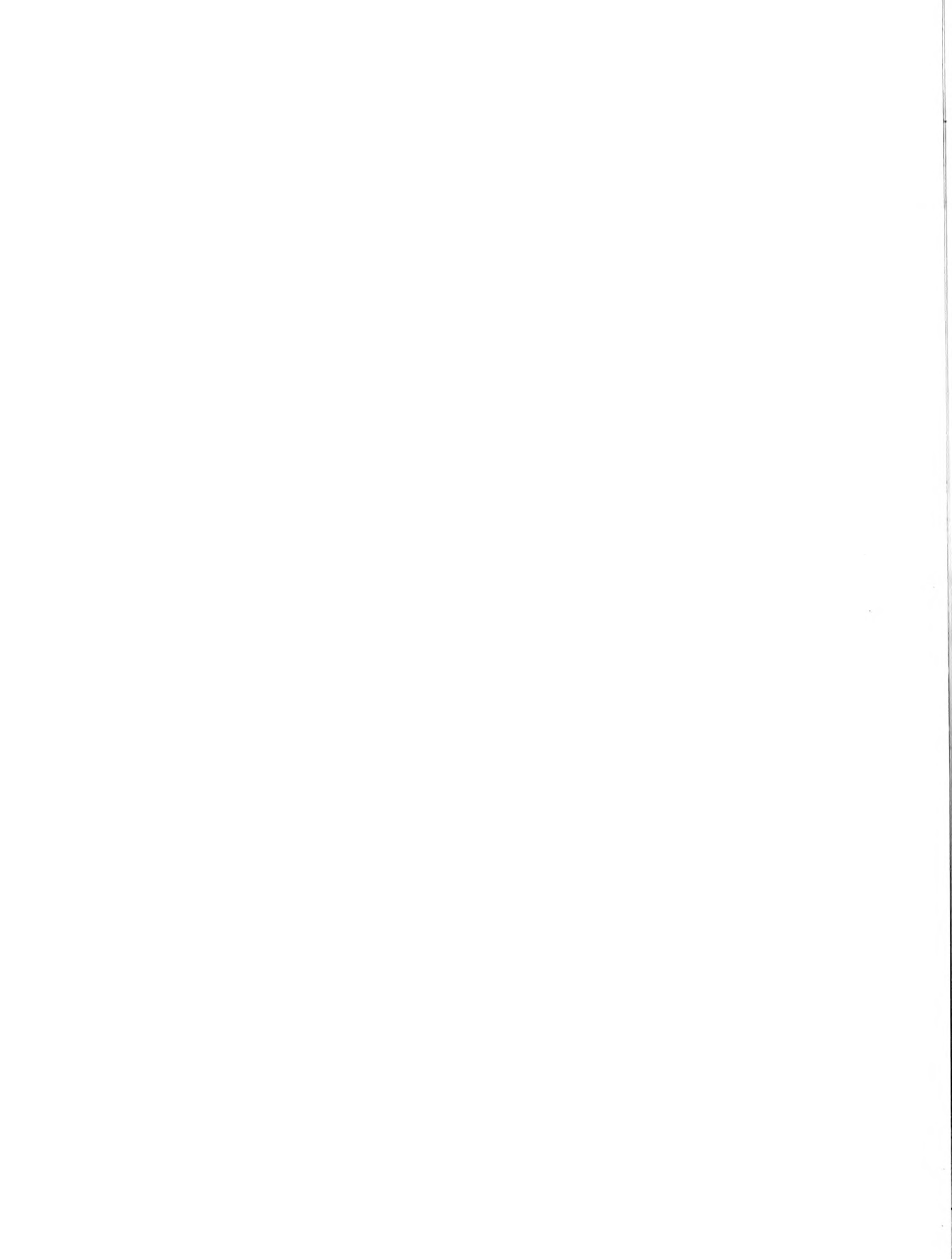
The site, if developed, will be situated next to the Boston and Maine R.R. freight yards in Somerville. Presently, there is no rail siding but numerous rail spurs run by the site. It would present no problems to extend them to serve the site.

One drawback of the site however, is that until Interstate 93 is completed, which is under construction on land adjacent to the site, there are only two major streets, Rutherford Avenue and Main Street, that lead from Charlestown to the CBD and the airport by way of either the Charlestown Bridge or the Fitzgerald Expressway, which has an access ramp a mile from the site. This means that the airport is approximately 40 minutes away by truck, with shipping hours from the airport or the CBD arranged around rush hour traffic.



A major attraction of the site is its placement in relation to the public transportation network. Sullivan Square, an MBTA bus terminal and train station, is a 5 minute walk away from the site. Moreover, Cambridge Street, located alongside the site, is a major throughfare for busses operating in the Charlestown/Somerville area.

The closing of Stark Street, Carter Street and part of Roland Street will not cause any inconvenience to businessmen in the area except perhaps the Prospect Hill Bottling Company. They may rely on Stark Street but would not be too inconvenienced by its closing. The only other firms using the streets to be closed are those that are located within the site. Traffic congestion, which may be a problem now, would be solved by the time the site is developed with the completion of Interstate 93.



BREAKDOWN OF PARCEL VALUES  
AND TAX COST

TABLE 8b

OWNER	PARCEL SIZE (SQ FT)	ASSESSED VALUE			
		LAND :	BUILDINGS	TOTAL	TAX
Boston & Maine	9,767	\$ 9,800	\$ --	\$ 9,800	\$ 1,712
United Farmers of NE	5,461	3,300	600	3,300	576
	7,398	4,400	600	5,000	673
	23,860	23,800	51,200	75,000	13,102
	3,659	3,600	--	3,600	628
	11,358	5,900	--	5,900	1,030
	19,523	19,500	100,000	119,500	20,876
	14,400	14,400	8,000	22,400	3,913
Total Parcel 2:	85,659	84,700	159,800	244,500	40,974
Nicolai, Dorreen & R.	1,172	500	--	500	87
	1,028	700	4,300	5,000	873
United Farmers of NE	4,017	1,900	--	1,900	331
D.L. Gennaro Motors	1,798	1,000	--	1,000	174
	8,675	8,700	2,000	10,900	1,869
H.P. Hood & Sons	10,001	10,000	--	10,000	1,747
	12,764	12,700	--	12,700	2,218
United Farmers of NE	6,586	6,600	18,400	25,000	4,367
	12,875	12,900	29,100	42,000	7,337
Miers, Charles J.	4,984	3,000	2,000	5,000	873
Boston Paper Board Co	36,097	29,000	--	29,000	5,066
	2,280	2,000	--	2,000	349
	37,750	38,500	11,500	50,000	8,735
Sall Paper Co.	38,443	38,200	1,800	49,000	8,560





TABLE 8b, Con't

OWNER	PARCEL SIZE (SQ. FT.)	ASSESSED VALUE			
		LAND	BUILDINGS	TOTAL	TAX
Sall, Benjamin	13,052	\$ 10,400	\$ 7,000	\$ 17,400	\$ 3,039
Sullivan, Joseph	1,172	500	--	500	87
	987	700	4,100	4,800	838
Gold, Edward R	33	100	--	100	17
	5,574	2,500	11,000	13,500	2,358
United Farmers of NE	5,880	4,800	2,000	6,800	1,187
TOTAL	300,594	279,200	253,000	532,200	92,807
+ Streets	44,400				
	344,994 or 7.92 acres				

Assessed Value Per Sq. Ft. =  $\frac{\$532,200}{344,994 \text{ sq. ft.}}$  = \$1.54 per sq. ft.

Assessed Value Per Sq. Ft. =  $\frac{\$532,200}{300,594 \text{ sq. ft.}}$  = \$1.77 per sq. ft.  
Excluding Streets

NOTE: The Commonwealth of Mass. (DPW) owns 67,000 sq. ft. of land adjacent to the site for the elevated section of Rt 93. Land under could be included in the site and used for parking and storage.



Assessed Value MAP -39-

Fig 8c

Hood Milk Co.

Hardwick Standard Chemical Co.

8

7

6

Stark St

5

4

11

Carter St

3

9

ROLAND ST

CAMBRIDGE ST

2

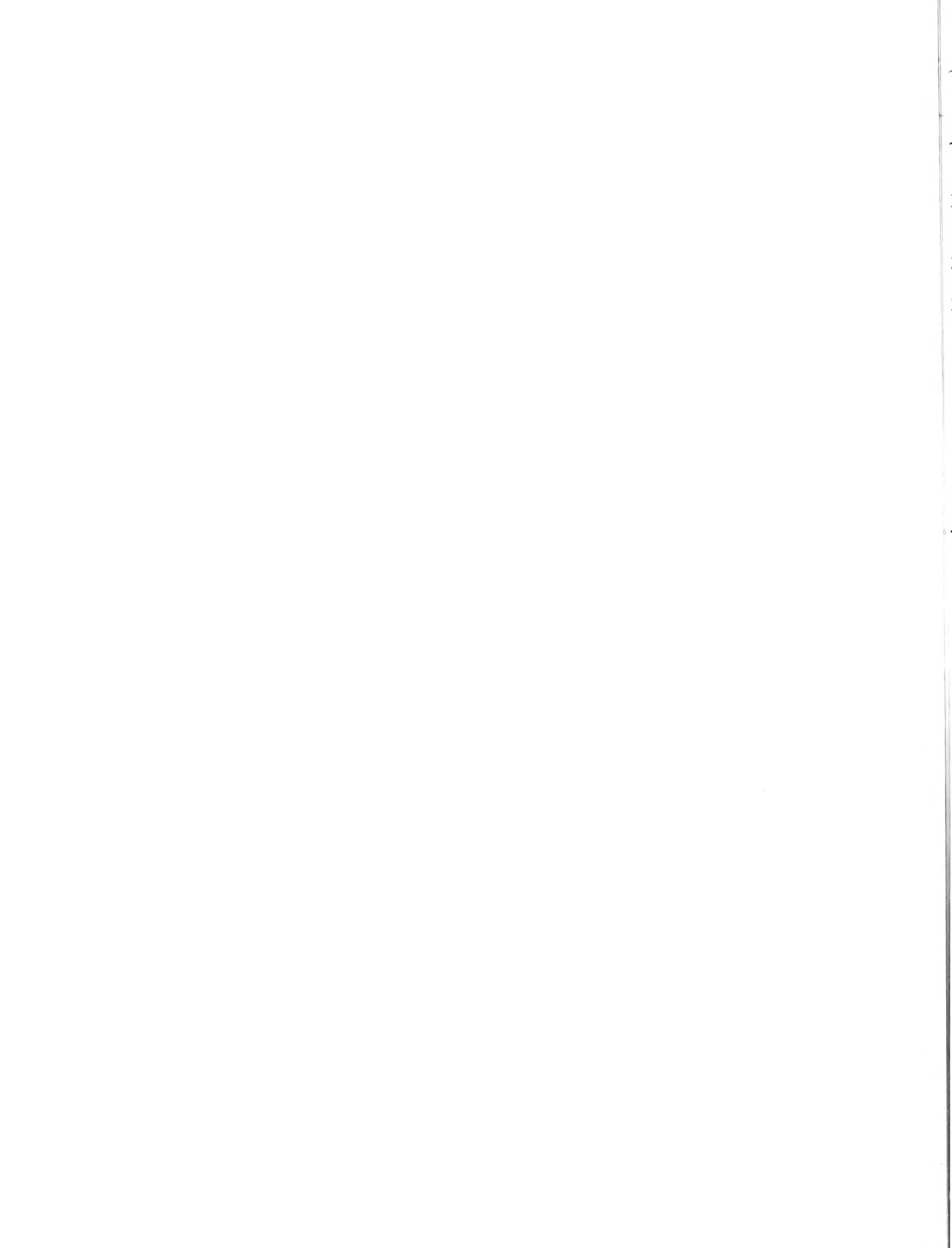
10

Rt. 93  
Elevating

Boston + Maine R.R.

Interstate 93

1



PRIME PARCELSSITE A

EXISTING USE	PARCEL (SQ. FT.)	CONDITION	DEGREE OF USE	LOCATION
1-Vacant Lot & Water	128,542			Corner of New St. & Sumner St.
2-Warehouse & Water	99,940			33 Sumner St.
3- Vacant Lot, Pier and Water	92,850			41 Sumner St.
4- Vacant Lot, Pier and Water	143,200			63-85 Sumner St
Total area = 10.66 acres; Land area = 4.82 acres				

SITE A CHARACTERISTICS

Wharf - yes, 5

Rail Siding - none

Public Transit- MBTA bus terminal and Maverick Train Station 900 ft.

Nearest Residentials - Housing project across from site on Sumner St.

Airport - 10 minute drive

Firms Relocated - 1

Residential Relocated - 0



# LAND Use Map (site A)

FIG - 8e

Boston  
Inner  
Harbor

APPROX.  
Pierhead  
Line

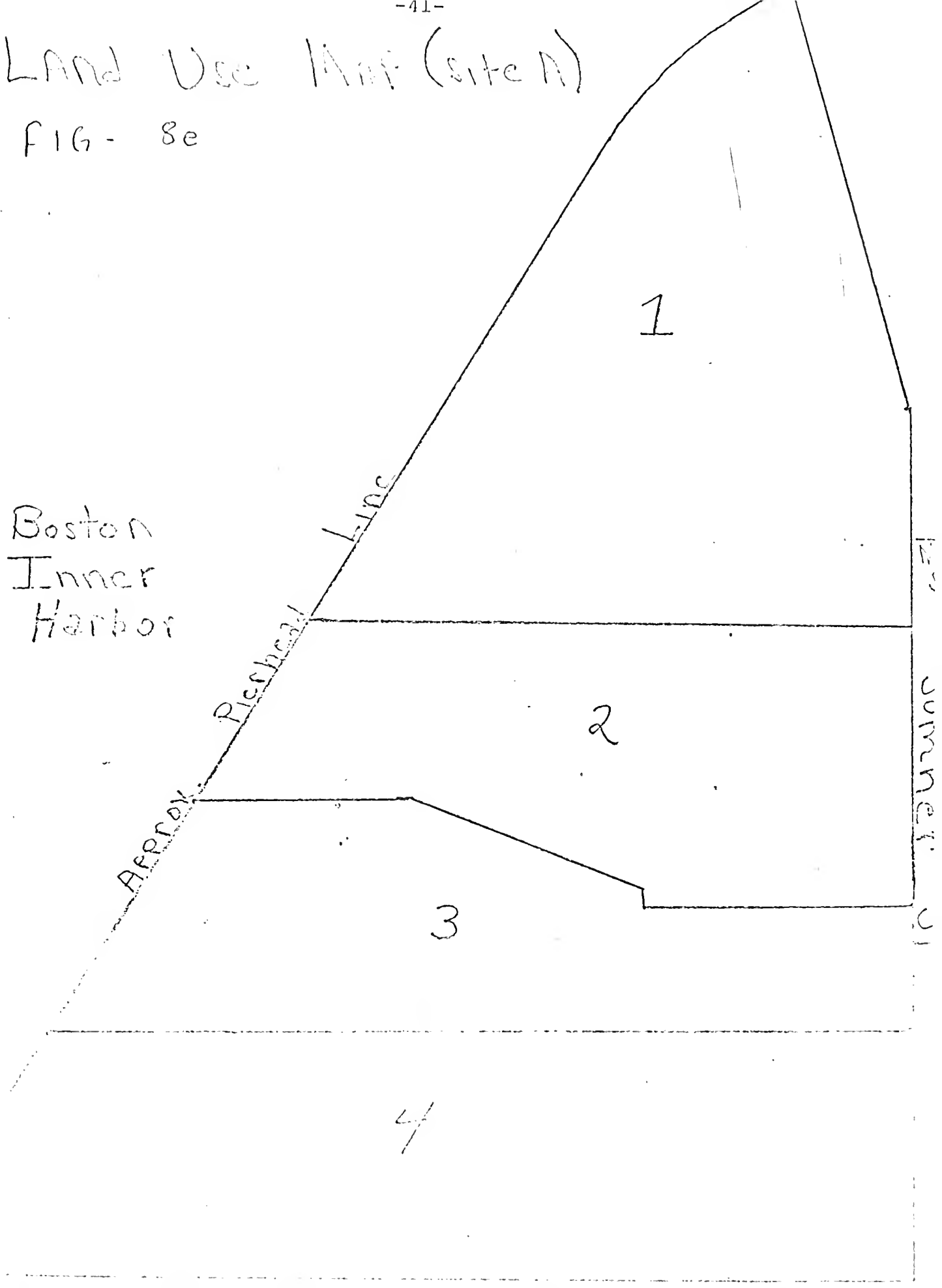
1

2

3

4

Water  
Corner  
Line







PRIME PARCELS  
SITE B

TABLE 8f

EXISTING USE	PARCEL (SQ. FT.)	CONDITION	DEGREE OF USE	LOCATION
1-Vacant Lot, Pier and water	175,000			150 Border St.
2-2 story truck equipment rental, pier & water	336,500			170 Border St.
Vacant Building, Vacant Land, Pier & water	94,500			172 Border St.
Total are = 13.91 acres				
Land area = 4.50 acres				

SITE B CHARACTERISTICS

Wharf - yes, 4

Rail Siding - None

Public Transit - MBTA bus terminal and Maverick Train Station 1,400 Ft.  
Also 2 public bus lines by Central Square.

Nearest Residential - 300 feet, buffeted by a commercial zone.

Nearest Expressway - R & C-1, 800 ft

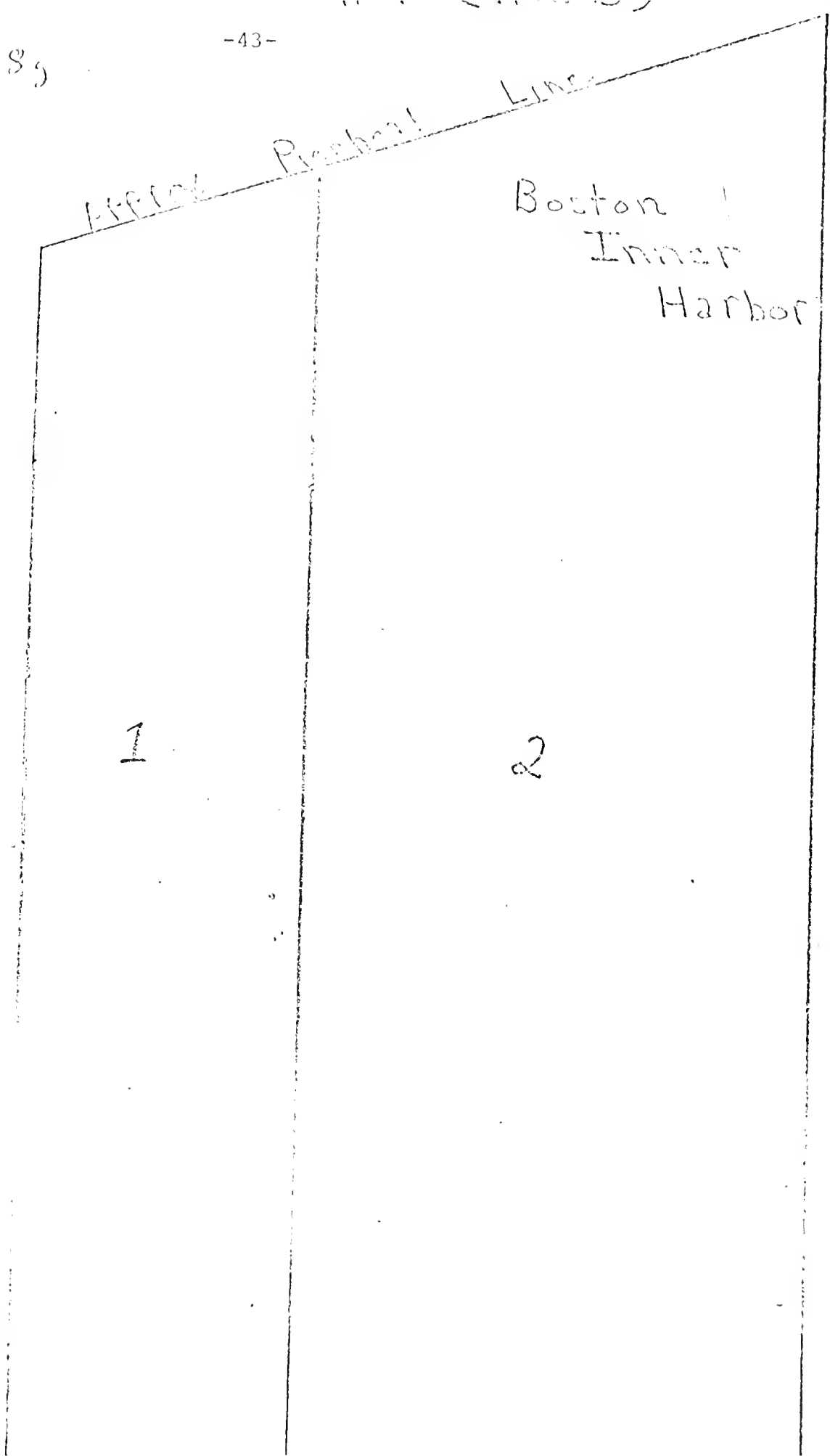
Airport - 10 minute drive

Firms Relocated - 1

Residential Relocated - 0



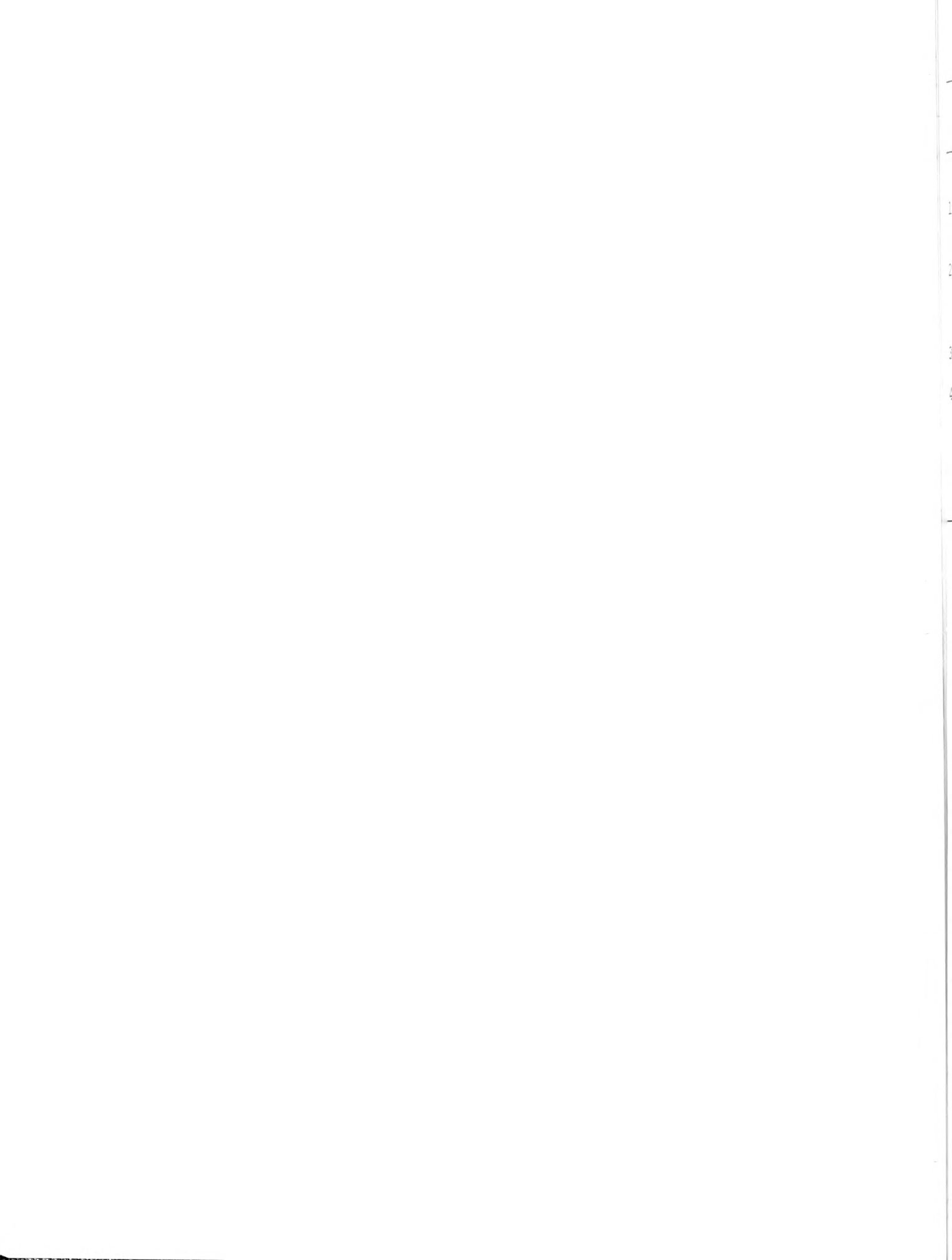
FIG - 89



1

2

3



PRIME PARCELS  
SITE C

TABLE 8h

EXISTING USE	PARCEL (SQ. FT.)	CONDITON	DEGREE OF USE	LOCATION
1- 2 Shacks, Pier and water	141,063			270 Border St.
2- Vacant Lot, Pier and water	340,183			308-312 Border ST.
3- Vacant Lot	3,550			318 Border St.
4- Vacant Lot (some parking) Pier and water	110,015			320-328 Border St.
Total Area = 13.65 acres				
Land Area = 7.44 acres				

SITE C CHARACTERISTICS

Wharf - yes, 3

Rail Siding - none

Public Transit - MBTA bus terminal and Maverick Train Station 2,300 feet.  
Also 2 public bus lines operating on Meridian St. 250 ft. away.

Nearest Residential - 300 feet, buffeted by a commercial zone

Nearest Expressway - RT C -1 2600 feet

Airport - 15 minute drive

Firms Relocated - 1

Residential Relocated - 0

\* Possible BRA Sites



Upper Pierhead Line

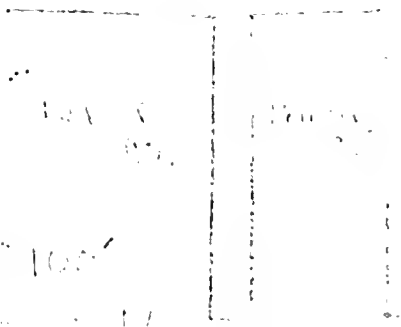
Boston  
Inner  
Harbor

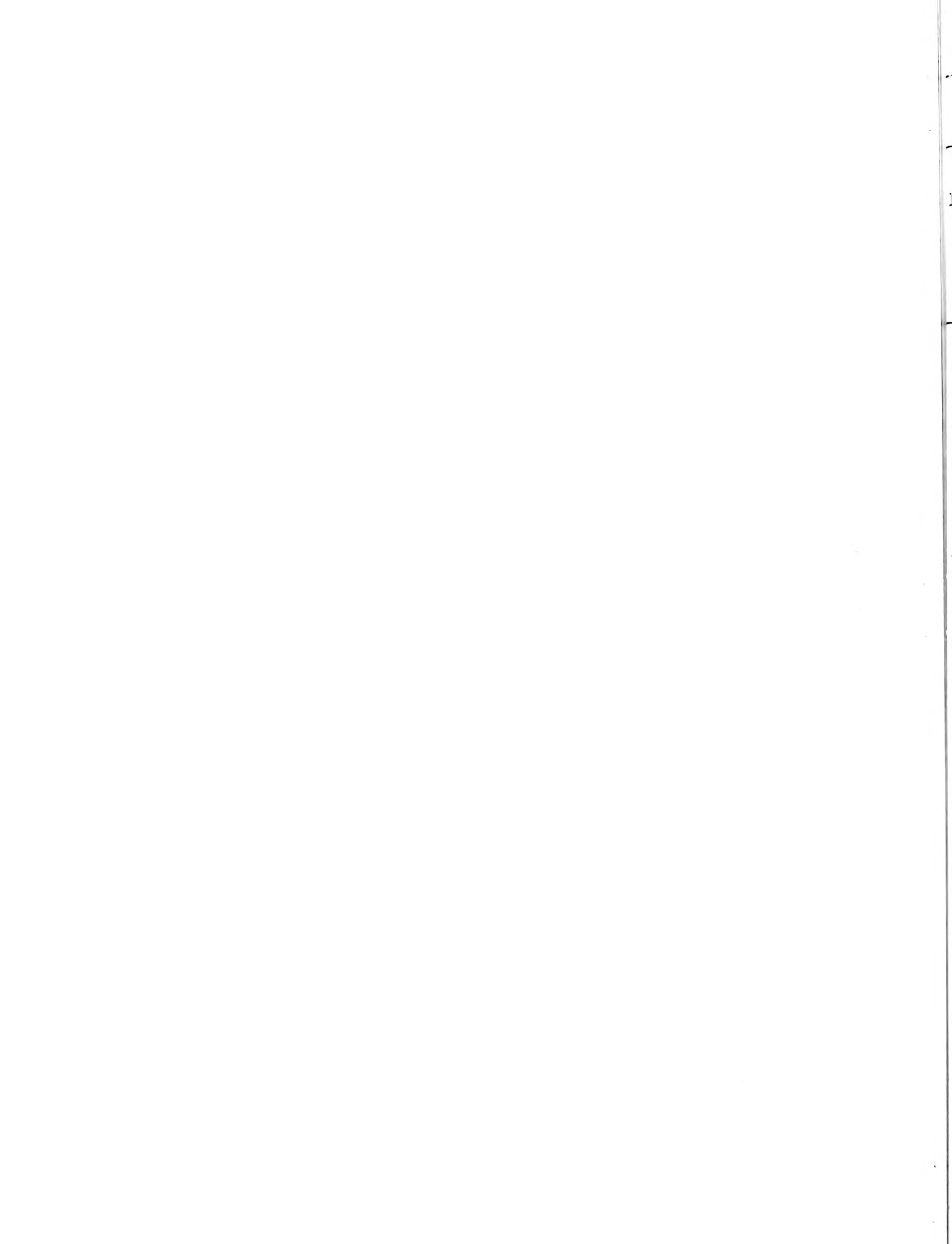
1

2

4

3







PRIME PARCELS  
SITE D

TABLE 8j

EXISTING USE :	PARCELL (SQ. FT.)	CONDITION	DEGREE OF USE	LOCATION
1- Vacant Lot, Pier and water  Total Area = 10.28 acres Land Area = 5.80 acres	447,883			408-424 Border St.

SITE D CHARACTERISTICS

Wharf - yes, 2

Rail Siding - none

Public Transit - MBTA bus terminal and Maverick Train Station 4,000 feet.  
Also 2 public bus lines operating on Meridian Street, 250 feet away.

Nearest Residential - Across the street from site on Border Street.

Nearest Expressway - RT C-1, 1 mile

Airport - 15 minute drive

Firms Relocated - 0

Residential Relocated - 0

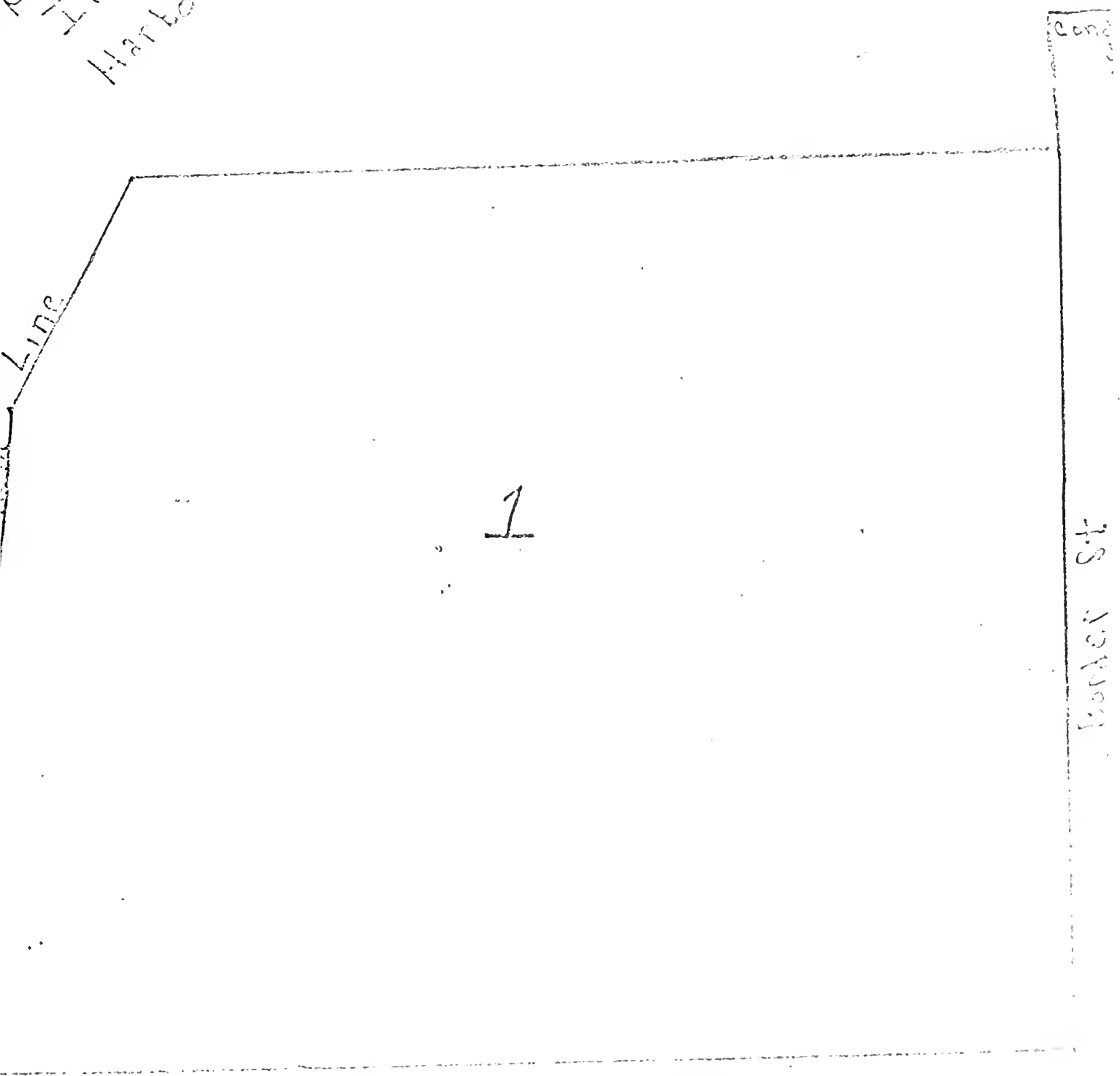
\*Possible BRA Sites



# LAND USE MAP (Site D)

FIG-8K

Boston  
Inner  
Harbor



1/2 1967



1

2

3

4

5

PRIME PARCELS  
SITE E

TABLE 81

EXISTING USE	PARCEL (SQ. FT.)	CONDITION	DEGREE OF USE	LOCATION
1- Perini Construction Co. Storage Yard, 4 small shacks, Pier & water	428,276			22 Nay St.
2- Vacant Building, Parking, Storage, Pier & water	61,250			90 Condor St.
3- 1 small shack, vacant lot & water	133,335			96 Condor St.
4- 4 small buildings and light parking	26,325			62 Condor
5- Part of Nay Street	10,000			
Total Area=15.13 acres Land Area = 9.3 acres				

SITE E CHARACTERISTICS

Wharf - yes, 2

Rail Siding - none

Public Transit - Maverick Station 1 minute, also one bus line operating on Mc Ardle Bridge.

Nearest Residential - Across the street from site on Condor St.

Nearest Expressway - RT C-1 , 1 mile

Airport - 15 minutes

Firms Relocated - 2

Residentials Relocated - 0

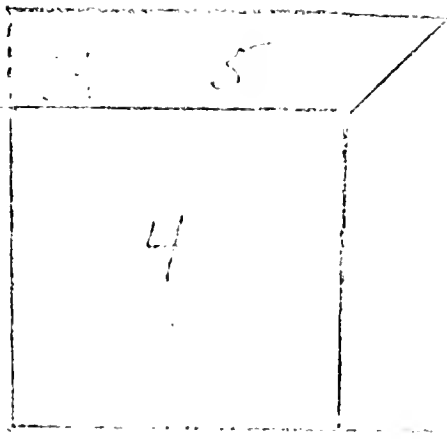


1

2

3

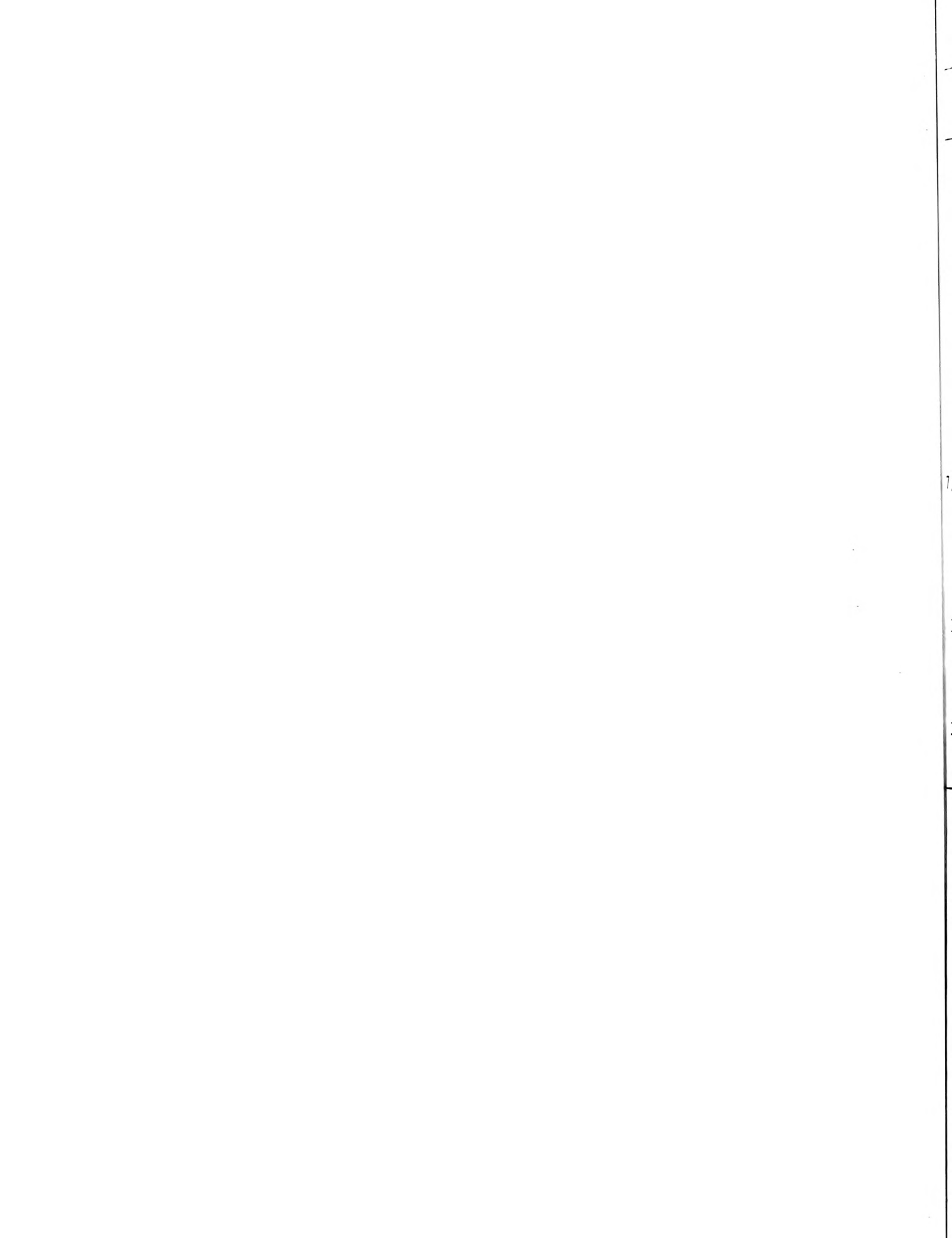
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4

...  
Site 5  
...

...



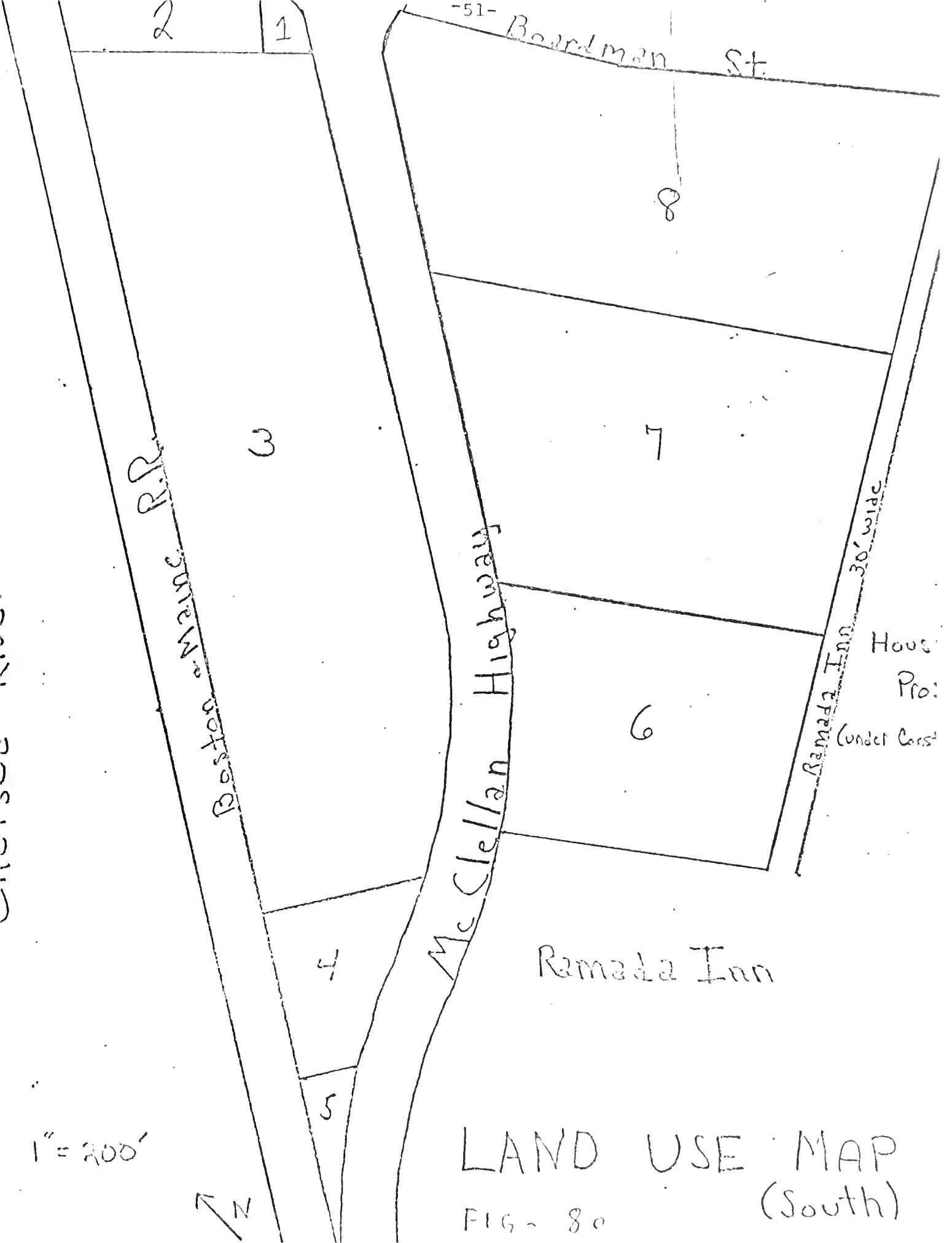


## PRIME PARCELS

TABLE 8n

EXISTING USE	PARCEL (SQ. FT.)	CONDITION	DEGREE OF USE	LOCATION
1-Gas Station	5,953			McClellan Hwy across Broadway
2-Vacant Lot	32,165			Beside Parcel 1
3-Vacant Land & approxi- mately 7 underground fuel tanks	506,522			Alongside Parcels 1 & 2
4-Bakers Dozen Doughnut Shop	43,083	Good	Moderate	Beside Parcel 3
5-Gas Station	14,500			Beside Parcel 4
7,8-Vacant Lot and approxi- mately 11 underground fuel tanks	793,321			East side of Hwy
9-Vacant Lot	20,753			Across from Broadman
10-Auto City (Car Auc- tion) approximately 5 underground tanks	317,516	Good	Light	Across From Walde- mar Avenue
11-Vacant Lot	26,500			Beside Parcel 11 on Revere Line







# LAND Use MAP (North)

Fig. 80'

GROSSMAN Industrial Property 804,000 sq. ft.

City of Reverse

Boston + Maine R.R.

McClellan Highway

Susfolk Downs Property →

Vacant LAND

Gas Station

Waldemar Ave

VACANT Hill

Boatman St

12

10

9

2

1

8

1" = 200'



Proposed Site

(S 11)



## EXISTING USE

At the present time, most of the land consists of vacant lots and small retails. The two gas stations and the donut shop would not present any problems in relocation. However, one of the major problems faced by the creation of this site is the fuel tanks build underground during WWII. The maps indicate 18 such tanks dispersed randomly on both sides of the highway.

The site, although located adjacent to the Chelsea River, appears capable of holding multi-storied buildings, at least to the east of the McClellan Highway. Ample proof of this is the Ramada Inn, which is approximately 10 stories, and the 3 story industrial building formerly owned by Transitron.

Only one major firm would be forced to relocate if this site is developed. That is Auto City (Parcel 10). Relocation may be difficult if they desire a parcel of comparable size. Parcel II is owned by the B & M Railroad who at one time ran a spur over the land but took the tracks up in the early 60's.

## LOCATION

The site is excellantly located for most any types of industry. It's proximity to the airport is one of the major attractions. Because it is located alongside the McClellan Highway, access to the airport is possible within 5 minutes.

The site has a Boston & Maine RR spur running into the west side parcel. This line not only handles freight but also commuter service. The site is also serviced well by public transit. The





Orient Heights MBTA station is located within a 5 minute walk. It also has two bus lines operating alongside it, one on Boardman Street and the other on the McClellan Highway.

In addition to the labor supply that can be delivered by the excellent transportation network in this area, another large labor supply is readily available in the heavily populated district within walking distance of the site. A buffer zone exists between the site and the residential area, keeping them separate but still not making the distance too great for workers to walk. The only problem may arise from the housing development presently under construction on an adjacent parcel. The site, however, allows ample space for the construction of a buffer zone between the two parcels.



UNRECORDED

Boston & Maine R.R.

Boardman St.

3

8

7

6

McClellan Highway

Ramada Inn 30' wide

House  
Prop  
(Under Const)

4

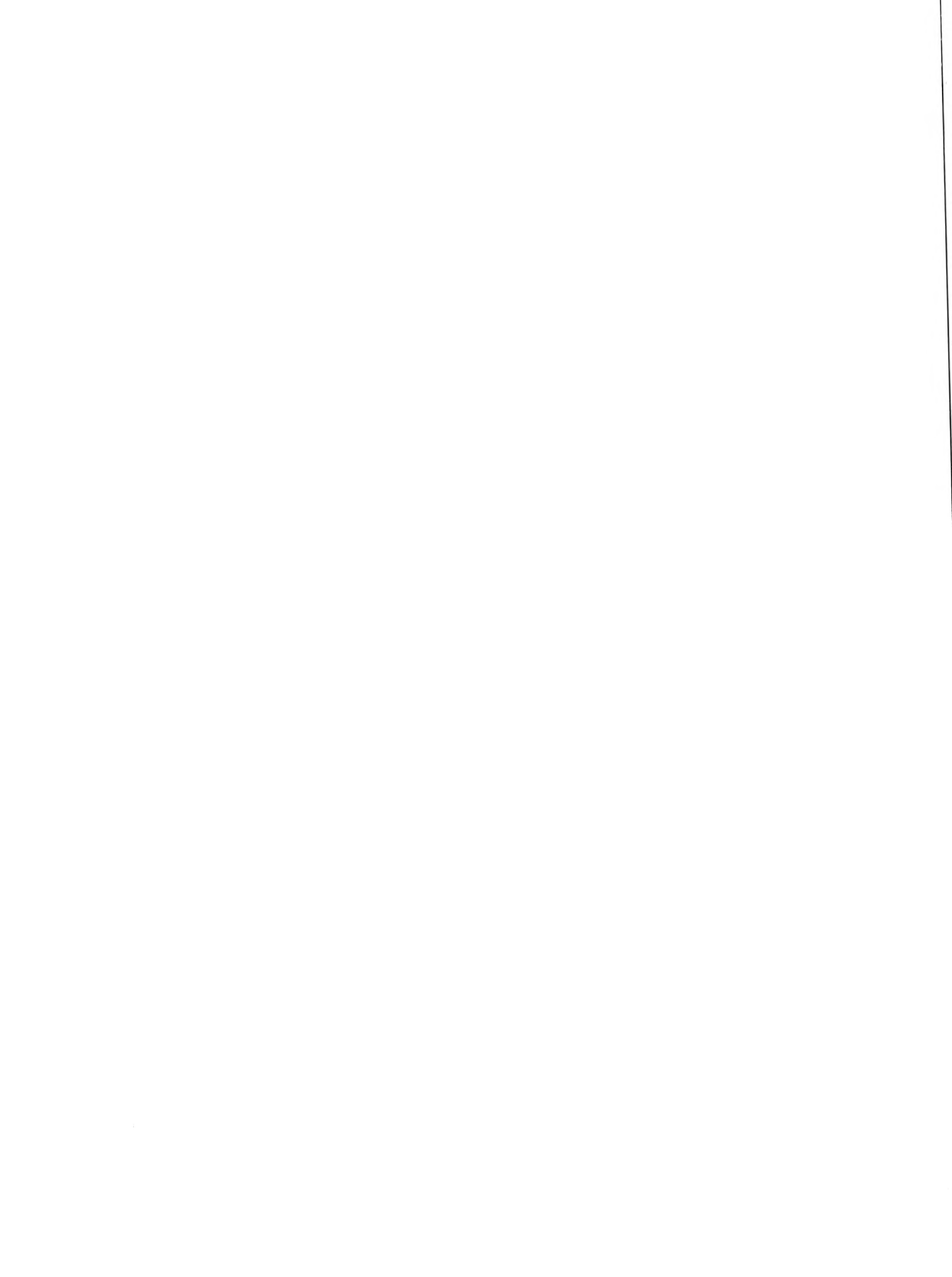
Ramada Inn

5

1" = 200'



Assessed Value MAP  
FIG- 8p (South)



# Assessed Value MAP (North)

Fig - 8p'

GROSSMAN Industrial  
Property  
804,000 sq. ft.

City of Reverse

Boston + Maine R.R.

McClellan Highway

Suffolk Downs  
Property →

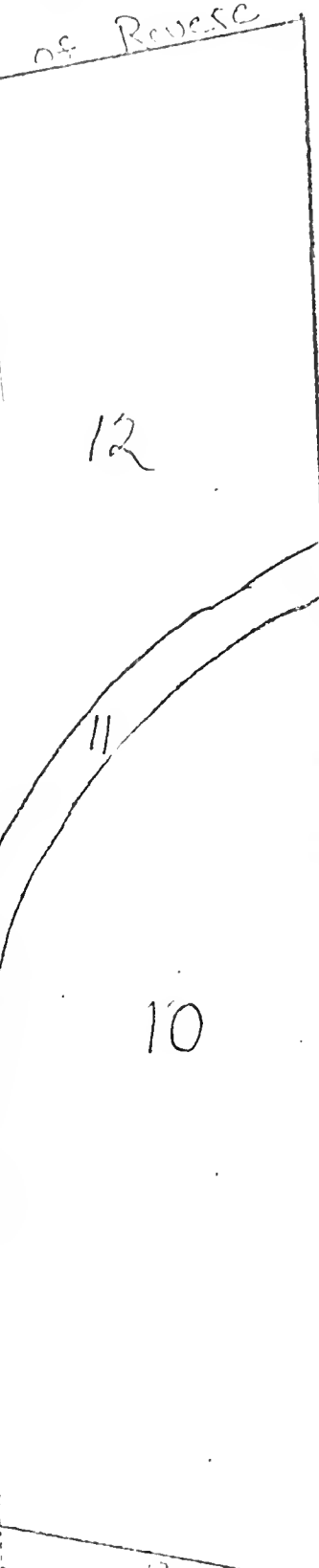
VACANT  
LAND

gas  
station

waldemar ave

VACANT  
Hill

BOGEMAN ST.



1" = 200'



Proposed Site (South)

1972

Industrial Land Use Survey  
E. Boston, NEW, Charlestown

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
Library









BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 06352 105 6

